

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7916
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 05123

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XH, GE, US
SUBJECT: TESTIMONY ON EASTERN EUROPE BEFORE HIRC BY
- DAS LUERS

REF: A. STATE 194188, B. BERLIN 4865, C. BERLIN 3699.

1. WE ASSUME THAT THE HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE
HEARINGS ARE ESSENTIALLY AN EDUCATIONAL EFFORT TO RAISE
PUBLIC/CONGRESSIONAL AWARENESS OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS
AFFECTING US SECURITY AND OTHER INTERESTS IN EASTERN EUROPE
AND TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF US POLICIES. WE SEE
THE HEARINGS ALSO AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT
ON UNRESOLVED BILATERAL ISSUES AND TO FURTHER THE EVOLUTION
TOWARD GREATER DIVERSITY IN THE SOVIET BLOC. IN OUR VIEW
IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP FORMULATIONS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE
SUCH PROGRESS AS HAS BEEN MADE ON INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION
AND EXTERNAL AUTONOMY WITHOUT FURTHER STRAINING RELATIONS
WITH THE SOVIETS OR RAISING UNDUE CONCERN AMONG OUR ALLIES.
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2. IN THE CASE OF THE GDR, DAS SHOULD STRESS: (A) US
SECURITY AND OTHER INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY EN-
COURAGING RESTRAINT BY THE GDR IN BERLIN MATTERS; (B) PRE-
VAILING PUBLIC IMAGES AND PERCEPTION WHICH AFFECT POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION; (C) THE "PROFOUND INTEREST" EXPRESSED BY
THE GDR LEADERS IN DEVELOPING BETTER BILATERAL COOPERATION

WITH THE US; (D) PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING BILATERAL RELATIONS AS INDICATED IN REFS B AND C; (E) EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE US PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE AS REFLECTED IN THE GDR AIDE MEMOIRE OF MAY 1977; AND (F) UNRESOLVED ISSUES WHICH IMPEDE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND THE PURSUIT OF SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRADE GOALS.

3. IT IS OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE GOING INTO THE HEARINGS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE PREVAILING IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE GDR DO NOT FULLY CORRESPOND TO THE CURRENT SITUATION. THESE IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS ARE ESSENTIALLY A PRODUCT OF A LONG PERIOD OF ISOLATION, HOSTILITY, DIFFERENT VALUES AND DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE EARLY POST-WAR PERIOD, PARTICULARLY THE SUPPRESSION OF THE WORKERS' UPRISING OF 1953 AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL IN 1961. THE GDR STILL MAINTAINS RIGID CONTROLS, BUT THE SITUATION HAS NOT BEEN AND IS NOT STATIC. OVER THE YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF CHANGES. RECENT CHANGES HAVE BEEN FACILITATED BY FRG/GDR AGREEMENTS, THE WAVE OF DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITIONS, THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND ESPOUSAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. DAS MAY THEREFORE WISH TO STRESS THE FOLLOWING POINTS WHICH ARE INDICATIVE OF SOME PROGRESS TOWARD INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION.

A. THE GDR HAS BEEN REASONABLY FORTHCOMING IN DEALING WITH US HUMANITARIAN CASES AND SHOWS SOME UNDERSTANDING
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OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BETTER PERFORMANCE IN THIS AREA IN ORDER TO CREATE BETTER PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE US.

B. SOME 7-10 MILLION WEST GERMAN CITIZENS TRAVEL TO THE GDR ANNUALLY AS TOURISTS OR TO VISIT RELATIVES. THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HALF OF THE POPULATION OF THE GDR; COMPARATIVELY IT TRANSLATES INTO THE EQUIVALENT OF 100 MILLION EAST EUROPEANS TRAVELLING TO THE US ANNUALLY. THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE MILLION VISITS ABROAD BY EAST GERMAN PENSIONERS ANNUALLY AND 40,000 NON-PENSIONERS. NIV TRAVEL THIS YEAR TO THE US IS UP BY ABOUT 20 PERCENT.

C. WESTERN TRAVELLERS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, CAN MOVE THROUGHOUT THE GDR WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS AND CAN TALK FREELY WITH EAST GERMANS. AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, THE REGIME MAKES NO EFFORT TO DISCOURAGE THIS KIND OF MOVEMENT, ALTHOUGH IT DOES CAREFULLY MONITOR AND CONTROL CONTACTS BY GDR CITIZENS IN SENSITIVE POSITIONS.

D. WEST GERMAN TV AND RADIO COVER 80 PERCENT OF THE GDR

TERRITORY AND THE REGIME MAKES NO EFFORT TO CLOSE THIS CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WHICH HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN FACILITATING CHANGE.

E. THE GDR LEADERSHIP HAS RECENTLY UNDERTAKEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE CHURCH, PRESUMABLY TO IMPROVE ITS IMAGE AT HOME AND ABROAD IN THE CONTEXT OF DETENTE AND THE HELSKINI FINAL ACT. THE RECENT CONCESSIONS GRANTED THE CHURCH IN THE GDR HAVE BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR EASTERN EUROPE.

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F. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS MORE RESPONSIVE TO CONSUMER DEMANDS AND ASPIRATIONS THAN ITS PREDECESSOR; THIS IS REFLECTED IN INTERSHOPS FOR HARD CURRENCY AND ELITE SHOPS FOR SOFT CURRENCY, IMPORTS OF VW'S AND VOLVOS, INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LICENSES FOR PRIVATE SHOPS, LEADERSHIP APPROVAL OF THE CULTIVATION OF SMALL PRIVATE AGRICULTURE PLOTS AND KEEN INTEREST IN THE IMPORTATION OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND CREDITS FROM WESTERN BANKS.

G. THE GDR INTEREST IN WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, CREDITS AND MFN ARE THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS THAT COULD PROMPT THE GDR TO MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO US, SINCE THIS IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT ITS CURRENT POLICY EMPHASIS ON CONSUMPTION AND A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING.

4. WE WISH TO AVOID CREATING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GDR

IS A PARAGON OF VIRTUE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ACKNOWLEDGING
PROGRESS ON INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION. WE SHOULD KEEP UP THE
PRESSURE AND BEAR DOWN ON GDR DEFICIENCIES, PARTICULARLY
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IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. ABSENCE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREE PRESS, OPEN PUBLIC
DEBATE, AND THE USE OF POLICE COERCION AND TRUMPED UP
CHARGES AGAINST DISSIDENTS;

B. FOREIGN PRINTED MATERIALS SUCH AS NEWSPAPERS AND BOOKS
ARE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN EXCEPT FOR THOSE WITH A
PROFESSIONAL NEED;

C. TRAVEL TO THE WEST FOR MOST PEOPLE IS STILL SEVERELY
RESTRICTED. GENERALLY ONLY THOSE WHOSE BUSINESS REQUIRES
TRAVEL AND RETIRED PERSONS CAN GO WEST.

5. IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INCLUDE IN THE TESTIMONY A DIS-
CUSSION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN RELATIONS WITH WESTERN COUN-
TRIES, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE RECENT NATO COMMUNIQUE
CALLING ON MEMBERS TO MAINTAIN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
IN ALL FIELDS. WE BELIEVE THAT INCREASED INTERACTION
BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE
OF ENGINEERING SMALL CHANGES WHICH MIGHT RELEASE UNDER-
LYING FORCES AND ACCELERATE THE INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION
PROCESS. IN THIS REGARD, DAS MAY WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT
THE GDR HAS BEEN MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO EXPAND
RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, INCLUDING STATE VISITS, HIGH
LEVEL POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS, PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS,
VISIT OF RELIGIOUS, YOUTH AND TRADE UNION GROUPS,
TRADE EXPANSION, CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION IN
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

6. WE WELCOME A RETURN TO THE POLICY OF TREATING EACH
EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY INDIVIDUALLY. HERE WE WOULD NOTE
THAT THE GDR IS THE WESTERN-MOST EXPANSION OF COMMUNIST
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POWER AND INFLUENCE AND REMAINS AN AREA OF SERIOUS POTEN-
TIAL CONFLICT. THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY RESIST A LEVEL
OF WESTERN ACTIVITY THAT THEY PERCEIVE AS A THREAT TO THE
COMMUNIST SYSTEM OR STABILITY OF THE REGIME. IN RESPECT
TO INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION OR EXTERNAL AUTONOMY, IT IS
THEREFORE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THE GDR TO PERFORM IN THE

SAME MANNER AS SOME OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.
THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE SHOULD ACCEPT A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
CONCEPT. RATHER, WE SHOULD VIEW THE RELATIONS AS A PROCESS
AND CAREFULLY DEVELOP FUNCTIONAL CONTACTS AND FORMULATE
OUR APPROACHES IN A MANNER THAT WILL PRODUCE THE DESIRED
RESPONSE IN TERMS OF OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN
EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION. BOLEN

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